

From: gopal@teraoptic.com@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR,Gopal Raman
Date: 1/23/02 9:23pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Your Honor:

I am writing to convey to you my sense of disappointment over the recent DOJ settlement of the antitrust case against Microsoft Corp. I am a software engineer working in the silicon valley in California. I was formerly a researcher with AT&T Labs Research in Florham Park, NJ.

There are many reasons why I believe that Microsoft is a monopolist. They are the following:

1. Microsoft has effectively prevented PC manufacturers from shipping PCs with any other operating system other than Windows. They have done this by negotiating contracts with PC manufacturers that requires them to pay for a Windows license even if a PC ships with a different operating system.
2. Widely used Microsoft applications such as Word and Power Point use a secret format to store the content (such as documents and presentations) created by users. In addition, Microsoft gratuitously changes these formats with every new release forcing every user to pay to upgrade to the new version.
The secrecy issue exacerbates the problem of Microsoft's near monopoly on the PC operating system. If the file formats were shared freely, then these applications could be easily ported by other companies to different operating systems thereby encouraging users to choose an operating system other than Windows and interwork with Windows users.
3. Companies hesitate from building applications for the Microsoft operating system because of the threat of Microsoft being able to cause these applications to "break" in future Windows releases. In addition, Microsoft subsumes the function of third party applications into their proprietary operating system with each release. This not only violates all principles of good software and system design but also has the side effect of putting other application companies out of business.

Because of their monopoly position, Microsoft is not motivated to add useful features into their operating system that save time and money for users. For example, the X window system that allows multiple users to share a single server has been around since the mid 80's and is supported by all Unix systems. However Microsoft chooses not to provide this since more than one user could share a PC thus reducing the number of units sold.

In short, Microsoft has consumers at their mercy. They are only interested in getting more revenue at the cost of user convenience and ease of use.

In view of the above, I humbly and earnestly beg you to reconsider the recent settlement that would encourage Microsoft to continue their abusive practices.

Regards

R. Gopalakrishnan Ph.D

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Gopalakrishnan Raman
Senior Software Engineer
TeraOptic Networks
686 West Maude, Suite 103
Sunnyvale CA 94085-3518
Phone: (408)-331-0715
Fax: (408)-331-0104
E-mail: gopal@teraoptic.com